

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8170
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
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AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 2087

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, CY
SUBJECT: CYPRIOT HANDLING OF SIBAI ASSASSINS

REF: A. NICOSIA 2065; B) NICOSIA 2066

1. DURING MY MEETING WITH FONMIN ROLANDIS AUGUST 17, I CONFIRMED TO HIM THE INFORMATION I HAD GIVEN HIM BY TELEPHONE THE PREVIOUS DAY (REPORTED REFTEL A). THE FONMIN ASKED ME IF HE HAD UNDERSTOOD CORRECTLY THAT MY GOVT BELIEVED THAT THE ASSASSINS SHOULD BE EXECUTED. I TOLD HIM THAT, BECAUSE OF THE STANCE WE WERE TAKING AGAINST TERRORISM, MY GOVT DID NOT WISH TO DO ANYTHING WHICH WOULD EASE LOT OF CONVICTED TERRORISTS.

2. THE FONMIN SAID HE HAD MET EGYPTIAN MINISTER OF STATE FOR FONAFF GHALI IN ROME ON THE OCCASION OF POPE PAUL VI'S FUNERAL AND HAD TALKED WITH HIM FOR AN HOUR. HE SAID GHALI HAD FINALLY MADE IT CLEAR TO HIM THAT PRESIDENT SADAT AND SOME OF HIS AIDES BELIEVED THAT THE GOVT OF CYPRUS SHOULD PROCEED TO EXECUTE THE CONVICTED ASSASSINS AND THAT, AS FAR AS THE GOE IS CONCERNED, THEY CAN ACCEPT NOTHING BUT EXECUTION. ROLANDIS SAID HE FELT THAT GHALI UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED THE PROBLEM OF CYPRUS IN
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THIS MATTER AND THE FACT THAT THE GOC WAS UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES TO COMMUTE THE SENTENCE. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE DID NOT SEE HOW THE GOC COULD EXECUTE THE ASSASINS IN COLD BLOOD AFTER SIX MONTHS HAD PASSED.

3. I COMMENTED THAT IT ALWAYS SURPRISED ME HOW EASILY PEOPLE SEEMED TO FORGET THAT THESE INDIVIDUALS HAD THEMSELVES MURDERED

SOMEONE IN COLD BLOOD. THE FONMIN ADMITTED THAT THIS WAS THE CASE BUT POINTED OUT THAT THE TREND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WAS TO GET AWAY FROM CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. IN ALL FRANKNESS HE DID NOT THINK THE GOC WOULD EXECUTE THE ASSASSINS. IN ANY EVENT, THEY NOW HAD SOME LEEWAY IN THAT THE SUPREME COURT HAD POSTPONED THE DATE OF EXECUTION UNTIL SEPT. 30 (SEE REFTEL B). FONMIN SAID THAT THEY HAD ALREADY APPROCHED OTHER COUNTRIES AND WERE ASKING THEM TO INTERVENE WITH THE EGYPTIAN GOVT IN HOPES THAT THEY COULD COME TO SOME COMMON UNDERSTANDING REGARDING THE DISPOSITION OF THE ASSASSINS. IN CLOSING OUR DISCUSSION OF THIS ISSUE, THE FONMIN COMMENTED THAT HE COULD FORESEE THE POSSIBILITY THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN HIS COUNTRY AND EGYPT MIGHT DETERIORATE EVEN FURTHER.

STONE

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